

Newark; and singer Dionne Warwick. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Remarks at a Brunch for
Representative Robert Torricelli in
Teaneck, New Jersey**

October 20, 1996

The President. Thank you so very much.
[At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.]

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Thank you. Wait, wait, wait a minute, wait. Okay, wait, we've heard—we've got your message now. Do you believe in free speech?

Audience member. [Inaudible]—of Cuba or your blockade of Iraq.

Audience member. You were the one responsible and——

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Wait, wait, we've heard from you. Now it's my turn. It's my turn. Free speech. Have you ever noticed—it's very interesting, a lot of people want free speech for themselves, but don't believe in it for anyone else. All right, it's my turn.

Audience member. Let the President speak.

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to talk, and you can pay attention to her or you can pay attention to me. Now, let me, first of all, say——

Audience member. Let's hear from the President.

The President. Let's talk about what she—number one, we have not killed a million people with our blockade of Iraq. The Iraqis—Saddam Hussein could have had food and medicine for his children 3 years ago, and he refused to take it. That's one of the biggest lies I ever heard. Saddam Hussein is oppressing his people, we're not. Secondly, Fidel Castro had Americans murdered illegally, and that was wrong, too. And I'm proud that we have a blockade against people who kill innocent Americans.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, this is a private event. Whoever is hosting it can let these people talk, or you can let me talk. You can do whatever you want to do. I want to ask——

[The disturbance continued.]

Audience member. Get her out of here!

The President. Wait, wait. Hey, wait, this might be interesting. She talked about the war on the poor. Fact—facts are inconvenient. We had the biggest drop in child poverty last year in 20 years. Second fact: We had the biggest drop in poverty in households headed by women in 30 years. We had the biggest decrease in inequality among working people in 27 years. What else should we talk about? I like this. This is good.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Bye. Goodbye.

[The demonstrator left the room.]

The President. I have to tell you, folks, I don't mind people coming to our crowds to demonstrate; I just think that free speech should be a two-way street. I think it's fine if they come here and say whatever they want to say.

Let me thank Governor Florio and Congressman Payne for being here. Where's Donald Payne? I know he's here somewhere. He came in with us. Thank you, Don, for being here. Let me also say that we have, I believe, three other candidates for Congress here: Steve Rothman, Bill Pascrell, Chris Evangel. Thank you three for being here. I want to thank Senator Lautenberg for what he said and for what he's done and for helping me to stand against the onslaught of the last 2 years and particularly in his work to protect the environment. And I want to thank Bob Torricelli for his remarks. I was thinking, now would I say that for him if you just have one vote to give? [Laughter] Split it—[laughter]—vote twice.

What I would like to say to you is something similar, but I think the issue here is not one of party so much as country. And the question is what the direction of the country should be. And we are fortunate, really, all the voters in this country are fortunate in that there is a clear difference, so

that people have a real choice. And what remains is for people to understand the choice, understand the practical consequences of it, and then to act on it. And that is really what must be done between now and November 5th.

All of you by coming here and expressing your support for Bob and for others who are running have helped to make that choice clearer for the people of New Jersey. I hope you will also do what you can between now and the election to talk to family members, friends, coworkers, people you know here and in other States as well, because this choice that we face is very profound and should have the input of every single American who is registered to vote.

One of the things that concerns me about campaigns when they become too negative is that a lot of people can then just get kind of turned off and say, "Well, maybe this doesn't have anything to do with me." And what I tried to do in that debate in San Diego was to keep going back and answering the questions the people were asking so they would see it does have something to do with them and with you.

And I have to tell you, I was very proud of our country when I met those 123 people in San Diego. I thought they did a terrific job. They were all undecided voters, and I thought they did a very good job of asking questions. I only wish that they had had a chance to ask 20 more, because they did a good job. And I bet if we'd had 120 people from New Jersey they would have asked similar questions. And that's the great thing about this country and the great thing about this process.

And I just want to say, there may be very little more I can say to all of you. This is Sunday, and in our church we used to call this preaching to the saved. I guess that's what we're doing here today. *[Laughter]* But I would like for you to just think about, again, the fact that there are some very big ideas which have huge practical consequences to people at issue in this election. I said that I wanted to create a country in which there was opportunity for everyone responsible enough to work for it and in which people were coming together instead of being divided by their differences, that I want to

build a bridge to the future that's wide enough and strong enough for all of us to walk across.

The other side says they trust the people and we trust the Government. And what they want you to believe is that anybody who is elected to office becomes part of the Government and automatically sort of takes leave of their senses, their sensibility, their ability to listen to you. If that's what they think, why do they try so hard to stay in the Government? I don't understand that. *[Laughter]*

But this has enormous consequences. My view is that the Government is simply a partner, one partner in America's great mosaic. But there are some things that we can do better as a nation if we do them together than we can if we're left to do them by ourselves, if you believe, as I do, we should build a bridge to the future that all of us have a chance to walk across. That is the only question.

The fact is that, with the support of Senator Lautenberg and Congressman Torricelli, we reduced the size of the bureaucracy, the number of regulations, more than the two previous administrations did. We eliminated more programs, altogether, outright than the two previous administrations did. But we felt that we still had some responsibilities together, which included protecting the environment; giving people a chance to get an education; investing in our common economic future, including research and technology; and growing this country together. And the choices are stark. You can see the choices we have made by working together.

Now, if you compare that to the budget that I vetoed, even when they shut the Government down, it's very interesting. Their idea of moving toward the 21st century, a time when learning is more important than ever before, was to enact the first budget that ever cut education—\$31 billion—cut student loans, cut 50,000 people out of Head Start. We beat that and just added 50,000 people to the Head Start program. Big difference, huge consequences.

Their idea on the environment was to cut back on environmental enforcement and also to abandon the idea that the polluters should pay for the pollution that he or she caused, let the taxpayers pick up that bill while we

cut back on further cleanups and further environmental protection. That's a huge difference. Our idea has been safer drinking water, higher standards for food, get chemicals out of air, give communities more right to know, clean up more toxic waste sites in 3 years than they did in 12. And we want to clean up 500 more in the next 4 years so our kids will all be growing up next to parks, not next to poison. That's a very great difference, and I think I know which side you're on.

On Medicare, you know, now they accuse of us being Medi-scare. Let me just remind you of what happened. When we realized we had to make some savings in the Medicare program to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, the trustees of the fund made a certain recommendation. This happens every 4 or 5 years. We adopted it and went a little beyond it. And we said, "Okay, we'll protect Medicare for a decade." They said, "We want to cut 2½ times that much." All the hospital associations in the country said, we could put 700 hospitals in dire straits if you do that.

Now, those are the facts. When they had a chance, that was their approach. They said, "We're going to repeal 30 years of a commitment the National Government made to families with children with disabilities, to help those families stay in the middle class, keep working, and maintain their children at home. We're going to repeal the national nursing home standards. We're going to walk away from the help we're giving to middle class families whose parents have to go into nursing homes at an average cost of \$38,000 a year."

Let's not forget what the real choices were here. Now, that was their preferred policy option. So it wasn't that we weren't willing to do the responsible thing; we have done the responsible thing; we will do the responsible thing. But I will never preside over a country, if I can stop it, that walks away from our common commitment to help people who are working hard to build strong families, do decent work, maintain their middle class lifestyles, even if they have a parent that needs to be in a nursing home or a child with a disability. I will never do that. And you shouldn't do that either.

So my message to you is simple: We tried our approach, and we're better off. We have more jobs, more new businesses, lower unemployment, higher homeownership than we've had in 15 years, 4 years of declining crime rates, declining gun violence rates. We're moving in the right direction.

The last thing we need to do is to go back to an approach which tells people they're on their own. Should we abandon the safe and drug-free schools program or the National Government support for it? I don't think so. Did we make a mistake to pass the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban and to expand the Brady bill's prohibition on handgun buying from felons to people who beat up their spouses and their kids? I don't think so. I think we did the right thing. Should we keep going? I think we should.

And so I want all of you to think about that and to think about what else you can do for Bob Torricelli, not because of Bob Torricelli but because of you and because of the people you care about and because of those little kids I shook hands with outside who couldn't get in here today. Some of them may never be able to go to a fundraiser, but they do deserve a right to get a good education, live in a clean environment, have a decent job, live on a safe street, and have a good future. That's what they deserve.

And we are changing dramatically in the way we work and live and relate to the rest of the world. That's going to happen regardless. We have to decide how we're going to respond to those changes. I want to respond to those changes in a way that builds a bridge we can all walk across and that keeps us coming together around our differences.

So much of the world today is being torn apart because people can't get along because of their racial, their religious, their ethnic, their tribal differences. We have more diversity in the United States than any great democracy in the world. And it is our meal ticket to the future.

This is another example in life when by doing the morally right thing, we will all grow wealthier, we will all grow happier, we will all be rewarded by just doing what's right. And we can only do what's right if we're willing to give everybody an opportunity, if we're willing to rebuild communities and willing to

give every family a chance to succeed. That's what's at issue in this election.

So I ask you again, when you think about us, do you think about all the efforts that have been made? Some of you have been coming to these events now all year long, and you're probably on your last leg. *[Laughter]* I can tell you this: There is a very high principle at stake here because even a lot of the good things that are happening in the world today are dividing people. Computers and technology and high levels of education, unless they are broadly shared, can help societies to become even more divided even as they become more prosperous. And I am determined to see America take advantage of these whole country stronger and more coherent.

We were just over at the New Hope Baptist Church, Bob and I were, and we're sort of in a good humor now. *[Laughter]* And we've got our minds right. And I was just reminded walking up there—I don't know why I haven't thought about it in a long time—about the magnificent poem by John Donne, who said, “No man is an island entire of himself. Each is a part of the—a piece of the whole, a part of the main. Every person's death diminishes me. And therefore, send not to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.” If you believe that, you should side with us because we believe we're in this together.

So I'd like to celebrate, scream, and shout, but it's not over yet. It's a long way from over. So I ask you again—I thank you for coming here; I promise we'll make it a good investment. We'll do the very best we can. But every one of you still has someone else in this State or in another State to whom you can talk between now and the election. Every one of you has someone who is on the margin of voting—should I or should I not—who needs to understand that there are huge, practical consequences to their lives in the outcome of these elections and that they need to show up and be counted.

So I ask you, if you want to help us build that bridge to the 21st century, build it every day between now and election day by finding somebody else who will be there and be there for people who care about them and their future.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Marriott at Glen Pointe Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Jim Florio of New Jersey. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Presidential Unity Fund Reception in New York City *October 20, 1996*

The President. Thank you very much.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you, thank you. Thank you so much, all of you, for being here. Let me begin by thanking the Members of Congress who are here, who were just introduced, Congressmen Nadler, Manton, Engel, Congresswoman Maloney. I know that Carl McCall and Speaker Silver and Martin Connor and Ruth Messinger I think is here and Mark Green. And Judith Hope, our State Democratic chairman—I think you're all here. Thank you. Thank you, Harry Belafonte, for being great and for always being there for us. And I want to thank Harry Belafonte for another thing, the support—early support—and strong encouragement he gave me to restore democracy and freedom to the people of Haiti. Thank you, Harry Belafonte, for that as well.

I'd like to thank Whoopi Goldberg, who has been the most faithful supporter of our common efforts for the last 6 months in the United States. Whoopi emceed my birthday party, and she was a stitch, as always, and almost made it bearable turning 50, just listening to her. *[Laughter]* And she is a wonderful person behind all that good humor. And she doesn't have to do this. She does it because she loves her country and cares about what happens to other people and their lives. And I am very grateful to her for that. And I'd also like to thank Marlo Thomas who spoke earlier, who has been a wonderful, progressive force in our country for so long. And there's another terrific actor here who has come to a number of our events in the last few weeks. And I want to thank him for his support and say that I look forward for decades more of stellar performances. Mr. Kevin